STATISTICAL SUMMARY

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS, U. S. D. A.

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Livestock Numbers Take Upward Turn

An upturn in livestock and poultry numbers took place last year, first time since '43. Net increase of all livestock and poultry during the year was about 2 percent. Cattle numbers went up 3 percent and the first increase in milk cows took place since the numbers started dropping 5 years ago. Hogs increased. Poultry increased. Workstock numbers continued down. Sheep continued the decline started 8 years ago but at a much slower rate.

Percentage Increases by Groups

Taking livestock alone, the increase during the year was 2 percent. Poultry alone increased 7 percent. Milk animals (milk cows, heifers, and heifer calves) show an increase of 1 percent. Meat animals (all cattle, hogs and sheep) increased 3 percent. Workstock decreased 9 percent.

Cattle Numbers Up 2 Million Head

The 2-million head increase in cattle marks an uptrend in the cattle numbers cycle which reached a low point two years ago. Number on farms Jan. 1 was 80.3 million head, compared with 78.3 million year earlier, 78.1 million in '48, and 77.6 million 10-year average.

Cattle Increase Largely in Calves

Increases were found in all classes of cattle except steers. These were down a little due to unusually heavy slaughter in '49. More cattle and calves are on feed now than year ago but the increase is in calves and other animals, not in steers. But the 7 million steers over a year old were more than in any year between '25 and '43.

Big Cattle Increases in the South

Largest percentage increases in all cattle numbers during the past year were found in the South Atlantic and South Central States.

Hog Numbers Up

Hog numbers on Jan. 1 were the largest since '46 and were up 6 percent from last year. Total number now, 60.4 million; last year, 57.1 million; '39-48 average, 61.6 million.

Sheep Numbers Down 3 Percent

Sheep numbers declined last year about 3 percent--smallest decline since '42. All sheep now total 30.8 million head, down from the 31.7 million head year ago and 34.8 million 2 years ago. Stock sheep numbers now, 27 million; year ago 27.7 million. Peak in '42 was 49.3 million. Stock sheep in Texas showed an increase, Wyoming no change. Other Western States showed a decrease. Texas now has about 35 percent of all stock sheep in the Western States and 25 percent of the U. S. total.

Number of Horses and Colts Continue Decline

Horses and colts on farms Jan. 1 was 5.3 million head, down 10 percent from the nearly 5.9 million in January '49. There are about 75 percent fewer horses now than in 1915. That year an all-time peak of 21.4 million was reached.

Mule Numbers Down 8 Percent

Mule numbers declined about 8 percent last year. The nearly 2.2 million mules now on farms is the smallest number since 1885. Mules have decreased in numbers every year since '25. Peak that year was 5.9 million head. Only a little over a third of that number are on hand now. Numbers have held up better in the South than in other regions.

Eight Percent Fewer Texas Goats

Texas goats, angoras mostly, number about 2.2 million head, down only 8 percent from a year ago as compared with a 20 percent drop in '48.

Ten Percent More Turkeys

Turkeys on farms numbered 6.1 million, up 10 percent from year ago but 13 percent below average.

Farm Values of Livestock Down

More livestock worth less money. Aggregate value all livestock on farms now $13.2 billion--$14.7 billion year ago, $8.6 billion, 10-year average. Only sheep higher than year ago.

Values Per Head, With Comparisons

Cattle per head, farm value, $123. Value year ago, $135; 10-year average, $67.10. Milk cows, 2 years and over, $177 per head; year ago, $193; 10-year average $97.40. Hogs, $27.10 per head; year ago, $38.20; 10-year average, $20.60. Stock sheep, $17.80 per head; year ago, $17; 10-year average, $9.11. Horses are valued at $45.70 per head; year ago, $52.30; 10-year average, $69. Mules, $99.40; year ago, $117; 10-year average, $126. Turkeys now $6.24 each; year ago, $8.70; 10-year average, $4.47.

Crop Conditions Mostly Favorable

Weather and other factors affecting 1950 crops were mostly favorable during the past month. Could have damage yet from possible severe weather in widespread portions of the country. There is some concern about future of fruits and fall-sown crops, also concern about the lack of natural control of pests resulting from unusually mild weather in the eastern half of the country. But mild weather enabled farmers to get ahead with their work.

Wheat Condition Good--Winter Damage Slight

Winter wheat so far is wintering well. Condition Feb. 1 was generally good, with damage extremely limited. In Nebraska, moderate snow cover has improved the moisture and protected wheat. But from Kansas to Texas wheat had no snow cover, top soils were dry and subject to blowing.

Orange and Tangerine Crops Well Above Average

Orange crop was reduced by January freezes in California and Arizona by nearly 6 million boxes. Total U. S. crop is now estimated at about 100 million boxes--48 million early and midseason, 52 million Valencias. Total production is about same as last year but is above average by 6½ million boxes. Florida tangerine crop, at 4.4 million boxes, is the same as last season and above average.

Grapefruit Crop Off a Fifth From Last Year

Nation's grapefruit crop now is estimated at 37 million boxes, is 19 percent less than last season and 27 percent less than average. Loss of grapefruit from freeze in California and Arizona was less than expected and was offset by an increase in Texas over earlier expectations.

PARITY PRICES FOR FARM PRODUCTS AND ACTUAL PRICES RECEIVED

COMMODITY AND UNIT	ACTUAL PRICE Dec. 15 1949	ACTUAL PRICE Jan. 15 1950	PARITY PRICE Jan. 15 1950
Wheat, bu. ....dol.	1.93	1.92	2.13
Corn, bu. ....dol.	1.13	1.15	1.55
Peanuts, lb. .... ct.	10.4	10.5	11.6
Cotton, lb. .... ct.	26.50	26.47	29.88
Potatoes, bu. ....dol.	1.31	1.36	1.67
Hogs, 100 lb. ....dol.	14.80	15.10	18.70
Beef cattle, 100 lb. ....dol.	19.00	19.40	16.90
Veal calves, 100 lb. ....dol.	22.40	23.30	19.00
Lambs, 100 lb. ....dol.	21.00	21.60	18.60
Butterfat, lb. .... ct.	1/ 57.8	1/ 60.2	69.0
Milk, wholesale, 100 lb. ....dol.	1/ 3.85	1/2/3.85	4.31
Chickens, live, lb. .... ct.	22.3	20.3	28.4
Eggs, doz. .... ct.	1/ 34.0	1/ 30.4	49.2

1/ Adjusted for seasonal variation.
2/ Preliminary.

More Lemons Than Last Year, But Below Average

Lemon estimate is down from month ago by 1 million boxes. The 11-million-box estimate compares with 9.9 millions year ago and 13.2 millions average.

Citrus Left For Harvest Down From Last Year

Some 66 million boxes of oranges remained for harvest on Feb. 1 compared with 68 million year earlier. About 21 million boxes of grapefruit will be available after Feb. 1 this year as compared with 23 million year ago.

Truck Crops Tonnage Up From Year Ago

Truck crops for fresh market this winter are indicated 10 percent more than last year and 25 percent more than the '39-48 average. These net increases are indicated as of Feb. 1...would have been greater but for declining prospects in January. Sharp drop in January for winter lettuce; smaller drop for winter cabbage, carrots, tomatoes, artichokes and green peas. Prospects improved in January for green peppers, snap beans, escarole, lima beans, and cucumbers.

Acreage Increase for Spring Truck

Spring truck acreage has increased, early estimates indicate. Most of increase from last year is due to a 76-percent increase in acreage of spring onions, mostly in Texas. Acreage increases for cabbage and watermelons were more than offset by decreases for asparagus, covered cantaloups, cauliflower and shallots.

72 Thousand Acres Texas Spring Onions

Acreage in onions for early spring harvest in Texas is nearly 72 thousand acres--largest since '36, more than double acreage harvested in '49, and 67 percent above '39-48 average.

Winter Potato Crop Slightly Smaller Than Last Year

Winter potato crop in Texas and Florida is estimated at 2.2 million bushels. Nearly 2.4 million in '49; 10-year average 1.6 million. Acreage in both States larger than last year but below average. Estimated yield in Florida, this winter 215 bushels per acre, is down from last year's record by 50 bushels but up from average by 63 bushels.

Early and Late Spring Acreages Also Down

Acreage for early spring potatoes expected to be planted in Texas and Florida is about 18.8 thousand acres, 14 percent smaller than the harvested acreage of early spring potatoes in '49 and 30 percent below average. Late spring acreage, in Cal. La., Miss., Ala., Ga., S. C., N. C., Texas, Okla., Ark., and Tenn. is expected to total 133.8 thousand acres, compared with 138.5 thousand last year and 177 thousand acres 10-year average.

All Early Potatoes, About 256 Thousand Acres --10-Year Average Harvested, 342 Thousand Acres

Total acreage expected to be planted in early commercial potatoes (winter, early spring, late spring, and summer) 256 thousand acres compared with nearly 266 thousand acres harvested last year. '39-48 average in early potatoes was 342 thousand acres. This year's figures are based on reports of farmers' intentions to plant, and their plans may be changed.

Acreage for Summer Potatoes Down 4 Percent

Acreage of potatoes planted for summer harvest (Va., Md., Ky., Mo., Kan., Neb., Texas, Ga., and N. J.) is expected to be 4 percent smaller than acreage harvested in '49 and 27 percent below average. Total indicated to be planted in these States, 92 thousand acres. Harvested last year, same States, nearly 96 thousand acres.

Large Stocks of Potatoes on Hand

Stocks of merchantable potatoes held by growers and dealers on Feb. 1 totaled 118.8 million bushels. This total is 13 percent larger than the 105.4 million bushels held last year at this time. Present stocks do not include potatoes held for food, seed, or feed, or those purchased by the Government under the price support program. For fuller details, by States, see BAE's potato stocks report of Feb. 14.

Milk Production at New High

The 9 billion pounds of milk produced in January was all all-time high for the month. Farmers had a few more cows. In addition, milk per cow was a record. Heavy feeding of grain and concentrates plus greener pastures than usual brought the milk. Last year's January production, 8.7 billion pounds. Average, 8.5 billion pounds.

Feed Values Lower

Dairy ration in cream selling areas cost $2.62 per 100 pounds in January compared with $2.90 year ago. In milk selling areas the average was $2.99 per 100 pounds compared with $3.39 year earlier.

Egg Production Also at New High

Egg production reached a new high for January. Total was 5.1 billion eggs. Production in January year ago was 4.6 billion, average 3.7 billion. More laying hens, by 7 percent. And hens laid more eggs per hen than year ago. Rate of lay was at peak levels in all regions.

Potential Layers Up 6 Percent From Last Year

Potential layers total 420.3 billion. This is 6 percent more than year ago, but is down from average by 5 percent. Increases from a year ago were 12 percent in the West, 9 percent in the North Atlantic, and 5 percent in all other regions.

Lower Prices for Chickens and Eggs

Farmers got about 31 cents dozen for eggs mid-January compared with 47 cents in January last year. Chicken prices in mid-January averaged 20.3 cents pound live weight, a drop of 10.4 cents pound from a year earlier. Declines in broiler prices generally had recovered by the end of January.

Feeding High at Present Egg Prices

With egg prices down, feeding was not so favorable. Egg-feed ratio in January was lowest for the month in 27 years.

Farm Wage Rates Now Included in Parity Formula

Beginning with this issue, parity prices will be based on the methods of computation specified by the Agricultural Act of 1949. Prices paid index now includes farm wage rates as well as interest and taxes and commodities bought by farmers. An explanation of the new formula will be found in the January 31 issue of "Agricultural Prices." See also "The Agricultural Situation" for February.

Prices Received and Paid, Both Up a Little

Higher prices to farmers for truck crops and meat animals mid-December to mid-January more than offset lower prices for poultry, eggs, and dairy products. Prices received by farmers mid-January were up from previous month by 2 index points (revised index). The index, at 235, is now down .30 points from January a year ago, and 71 points below record high reached in January two years ago.

Prices paid by farmers rose 3 points to 249. This is only 7 points below the 256 reached a year earlier and is down only 13 points from the record high reached in June and July, '48. (Prices paid include interest, taxes, and farm wage rates.) This 3-point increase in prices paid was due mainly to increases in interest, taxes, farm wage rates and in prices of feeder cattle. Parity ratio, (prices received index divided by the index of prices paid by farmers) was at 94, down 1 point from a month earlier and down 10 points from a year ago.

Little Change in Farm Employment But "Hired" Numbers Relatively Small

Farm employment in late January was up 2 percent from December but down a little from a year earlier. Number working on farms totaled 7.3 million compared with 7.4 million last year in late January. Total included 6.3 million farm family workers and 972 thousand hired workers. Year ago 6.4 million family and 979 thousand hired workers were at work. Total civilian employment in January (Census) was 56.9 million compared with 58.6 in December.

CURRENT INDEXES FOR AGRICULTURE

INDEX NUMBERS	BASE PERIOD	Jan. 1950
Prices received by farmers	1910-14=100	235
Prices paid by farmers, interest and taxes	1910-14=100	249
Parity ratio	1910-14=100	94
Wholesale prices of food	1910-14=100	1/ 240
Retail prices of food	1910-14=100	2/ 255
Farm wage rates	1910-14=100	3/ 429
Weekly factory earnings	1910-14=100	2/ 490
PRODUCTION COMPARISONS	**Jan. 1949**	**Jan. 1950**
Milk, (Bil. lb.)	8.7	9.0
Eggs, (Bil.)	4.6	5.1
Beef, (Dr. wt., mil. lb.)	4/ 6433	4/ 6998
Lamb & Mutton (Dr. wt., mil. lb.)	4/ 665	4/ 536
Pork & Lard (Mil. lb.)	4/ 9132	4/ 9982
All meats (Dr. wt., mil. lb.)	4/ 17021	4/ 18262

1/ Week ended nearest 15th of month.
2/ December figure.
3/ Jan. 1, adjusted for seasonal variation.
4/ Preceding calendar year under federal inspection.